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ABSTRACT

The Dial-a-Mentor Project (also called the Dial-a-Teacher Project) at Hinds Junior College in Raymond, Mississippi, was designed to provide an alternative delivery system for adult basic education (ABE) and to combat illiteracy. It was not intended to replace, but rather to enhance, established centrally located programs. Instruction was provided by telephone and mail; one phone was used for incoming participant calls, and two telephones equipped with an amplifier system were used by mentors for outgoing calls. Basic education instruction was provided by telephone on Monday and Tuesday evenings. Through the use of an assessment device, the mentor determined the participant's level of achievement. Upon receipt of supplies and diagnostic assignments, the participant called the mentor, who provided instructions. Completed materials were returned to the mentor, who checked them and called the participant. More advanced materials were then sent, and the same procedures were followed. Subject areas were arithmetic, English, social studies, and science. The Laubach method was used to teach reading. The project was workable. More than 100 participants were enrolled and received some assistance. The project provided ABE assistance to parents that enabled them to help their children. (A brochure is attached.) (YLB)

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HINDS JUNIOR COLLEGE DISTRICT
UTICA CAMPUS
UTICA, MS 39175

PROJECT DIRECTOR: DR. EDDIE E. DAWSON
DIAL-A-MENTOR
(OCTOBER 1, 1985 - JUNE 30, 1986)
FUNDING LEVEL: $5,170.00

INTRODUCTION:

As the economy tightens, travel becomes a luxury for many people; there are countless numbers of people who will not attend an adult education class. Another major effort to provide educational opportunities for persons with less than a high school education may be achieved by the use of the telephone and the United States Mail Service.

Psychologists have contended for years that individuals have different learning styles. Instruments have been developed to determine the particular learning style of a particular individual, and materials and methods of teaching have been designed to assist the various learning styles.

It is an accepted fact that all individuals do not learn the same way. Therefore, different delivery systems must be designed and placed in operation to accommodate a very large percentage of the state and nation's populace.

The nation has recognized and admitted that the United States has an educational problem. The problem of illiteracy and functional illiteracy has received a great deal of attention in the last few years. As a result, the nation is putting forth great efforts to eradicate illiteracy. In order to resolve the problem, it takes a great deal of vision (where there is no vision, the nation perishes), and we must have courage enough to try that which seems unattainable. The Dial-A-Mentor Project is just an example of the vision and desire to attain what appeared (to some) to be a project that was unattainable. The enactors of the project and the leadership of the institution sincerely believed in what appeared to be impossible.

In October 1985, the institution was approved to place in operation the Dial-A-Mentor Project (for participant understanding, the project title was changed to Dial-A-Teacher). Based on past experience we have learned that many adults are not able to attend an established class in a central location because of family responsibilities or a lack of will power to reveal their secret to others; that is, that they (the adult) do not possess basic education skills. These adults skills have been incognito. As a result they are functional illiterates.

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The Dial-A-Mentor Project was designed to serve this segment of the population. It was never intended to replace the established, centrally-located programs, but to enhance them. It was also designed to assist the "War on Illiteracy" efforts. It has been discovered that persons participating in the project possess some common characteristics:

1) they either fear or cannot attend an established program
2) once rapport had been established, participants were not embarrassed to reveal information that was of great assistance because they were anonymous
3) there appeared to be minimum fear or shyness in asking questions, and
4) they appeared to be comfortable using the telephone to secure our service

These factors in themselves mean that the program was an advantage to the participants.

PURPOSE

The Dial-A-Mentor Project is designed to provide an alternative delivery system for Adult Basic Education.

OBJECTIVES

In order to accomplish the aforementioned purpose, the program has the following objectives:

1) To provide instruction by telephone and mail
2) To provide a person in the Hinds County area that would assist each participant
3) To refer confident participants to a local adult education center

PLAN OF ACTION

The project was designed to operate in all areas of Hinds County that did not require a long distance telephone call to Jackson (this necessitated a Jackson location). The operation from the City of Jackson would have greatly expanded the geographical area that the program would cover (Flora, Florence, Madison, Bolton, Raymond, Flowood, Richland, Clinton, Richland, Edwards, Clinton, Ridgeland, Brandon, Terry and Byram). However, the approval of the project limited the program to the Raymond Campus which, in itself, restricted the geographical area that the program would cover in that surrounding cities of Jackson would not have been long distance became long distance to Raymond.

The Continuing Education Director at Raymond agreed to the use of his office, which proved to be perfect for the operation of the program on a small scale. The office contained

an unpublished telephone number and it was a straight line that did not connect to the switchboard. This telephone was used as a data-phone for the Continuing Education Office, which was ideal for the Dial-A-Teacher Project. The data-phone number was published by the Dial-A-Teacher project only, and utilized for incoming calls by participants and prospective participants.

Each mentor had access to another telephone for calls to participants. The two telephones for outgoing calls were equipped with an amplifier system that would allow the mentor to work and achieve conversation purposes without worrying about holding a telephone receiver to his ear.

The staff consisted of one instructor at that time; however, the program grew to the extent of needing further assistance to share the workload.

As stated in the original 1985-86 proposal "Briefly specify 1) What will be done, 2) When, 3) Where, 4) By whom", to reach the objectives previously stated.

Basic education instruction was provided by telephone from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. on each Monday and Tuesday night on the Raymond Campus of Hinds Junior College District. The entire institution was responsible for the operation of the project. The specific responsibilities were as follows: 1) The Vice-President for Fiscal Affairs was responsible for all monies provided to the project, 2) the Director of Adult Education was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the project, 3) trained, certified and qualified instructors/counselors were responsible for telephone and mail instruction and 4) staff members at random assisted in recruitment and referral.

Immediately after the project was approved efforts were put forth to seek out participants who needed and was willing to accept our services. Since the mentor has established rapport between many parents of the children he taught in the regular classroom, it was felt that this would be a good starting point. The mentor was fortunate in talking to about a dozen parents, relatives and friends of the children that he taught during the day. Each of them showed great enthusiasm and enrolled in the Dial-A-Mentor program. They also said that "if I gain nothing more than to be able to help my child do better in school, I will have gained a lot." By working with many of these parents, the mentor began to see a distinct improvement in their child's classwork, homework, attitude and even discipline. Many of these parents began to take on the responsibility of helping their own children which had previously been delegated to another member of the family or friend.

The "How" of this program was not included in the original proposal mainly because at that time the "How" of this program was not known.

Many of those "How" questions can be answered now. However, due to the wide variety of interest and enormous areas of skills and concepts involved in math, English, science, social studies, survival skills, following directions and basic education, only a few techniques can be mentioned in this report.

(1) When a prospective participant called the program or was called by the mentor, it was immediately determined if he/she was eligible to enroll in the program or in need of program services. If the participant was eligible, he/she was enrolled and the mentors explained the services offered by the program. If they were not eligible to enroll, various kinds of assistance were provided to them. Some prospective participants were interested in furthering their education beyond high school. These services were provided by the director to allow the mentors to carry out the project's intent.

(2) After a participant had been enrolled, the mentors immediately began establishing rapport with them, gaining their confidence, finding out their interests, areas of weakness and strength, in an effort to effectively help them. Enrolling in the program meant the completion of an IBM card, which requested personal data for the computer to generate a record.

Prior to sending a participant any materials, every effort was made to ensure that the participant could follow instructions. In many cases, materials on following instructions were sent first. Prior to sending instructional materials, the mentor, with the use of an assessment device, determined the level of achievement of the participant.

A folder was then prepared for the participants. Supplies and diagnostic assignments were sent to the participant to start working. Example: Should we find a participant who could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide, in many cases that was the starting point, if the participant desired. Simple one, two and three-digit problems were sent to them at various intervals.

When the participant received the information, he/she was requested to call the mentor. At that time, the mentor would give instructions to the participant. After the materials had been completed and returned to the mentor, they were checked and a call was made to the participant. If the materials were completed with little or no difficulty, more advanced materials were sent to them. Upon the participant's receipt of the checked materials, he/she was asked to call the mentor for further instructions.

Skills and concepts in fractions, decimals, percentages, and geometry were handled by the same procedure.

In the area of English - should one find a participant who was weak in grammar, sentence construction, comparison and contrast, word usage, word definition, or finding main ideas, specific work sheets on each concept were sent to him for

instructional purposes by telephone. If difficulty arose, the participant called the mentor for instructional assistance. Once the assignments were completed, they were returned to the mentor to be checked. Further assistance was given if there were a need. The areas of strengths and weaknesses are reported, Again, the materials are returned to the participant, with instructions for the participant to call the mentor for further instructions.

In the area of social studies, specific material on map reading, diagrams, charts, graphs, political science, geography, U.S. History and economics are sent to the participants for telephone instructions.

In the area of science - specific materials on natural science, earth science, physical science and the human body are sent to participants.

During the operation of the project, it was discovered that many participants were in need of reading instruction. It was hard and doubtful until the Laubauch method of improved reading was utilized.

Basic procedures after enrolling, regardless of area of instruction is summarized below:

1) Conduct assessment
2) Mail supplies, materials and a return envelope to participants with instruction to call the mentor when they receive them
3) Actual teaching begins when the participants call the mentor upon receipt of initial materials
4) When the mentor feels certain that the participant has a working knowledge of the material, he instructs the participant to complete and return all instructional materials
5) When the mentor receives the materials, he checks them and calls the participant to report strengths and weaknesses and provides instruction in the areas that need strengthening. This is done until the participant masters the skills involved
6) To ensure that the participant completes the instructional materials, they are requested to explain the instructional materials to the mentor

Participants are instructed to call the mentor if they experience any problems. Procedures two through six are the core of the instructional method for the Dial-A-Teacher Project.

Procedures for all subject areas are basically the same. The step-by-step method of instruction is employed in each subject area. A sample instructional conversation is as follows: In order for you to do division, you will need to learn the parts of a division problem. These parts are the quotient, dividend, divisor and remainder.

*The quotient is the number part of a division problem that is obtained when one number is divided by another.
*The dividend is the part of a division problem that is to be divided by the divisor.

*The divisor is the part of a division problem that is divided into the dividend to produce the quotient.
*The remainder is the part of a division problem that is left when a smaller number is subtracted from a larger number.
Write this problem on a piece of paper, while I explain it to you. We are going to divide 4, the divisor, into 5, the dividend, to obtain a quotient of 1 and a remainder of 1. Draw the division bracket, place the 5 inside the bracket and the 4 to the left of the bracket. Then divide the 5 by 4. Four will go into five one time, place the one over the 5, then you multiply the 4 by the 1, and your answer is 4, which should be placed under the 5, then you subtract 4 from 5 and receive the 1.
English example: How to determine the completeness of a sentence? In order for a sentence to be complete it must possess a subject and a verb. Also, it must express a complete thought. "The boy ran home." The first thing one should do is determine who is performing the action in the sentence. In this case, the boy is performing action. The second thing to do is determine what the boy is doing or has done. The boy ran. Therefore, ran is the verb. The boy ran home expresses a complete thought.

The institution was very helpful and concerned about the progress of the program. The institution provided the following assistance: 1) assigned a work-study student to the project, 2) provided telephone services at no charge to the project, 3) provided office space at no cost to the project, 4) provided the use of a file cabinet, 5) provided clerical and supervisory assistance and 6) many intangible assistance that was of great help to the on-going operation of the project.

A dollar figure was not attached to the assistance provided. Therefore, no dollar amount was calculated and maintained. The assistance played a major role in the success of the project.

ACCOMPLISHMNENTS

Our original proposal indicated that the Dial-A-Mentor Project would reach the target population of those persons without a high school diploma or GED (General Education Development) certificate and in need of basic skills. Although the program was not designed to provide all necessary instruction, it will provide the motivation, confidence and some of the basic skills for the participant to carry to an Adult Basic Education/General Education Development Program.

After nine months of operation, a few of the Project's accomplishments are listed as follows:

1) It is proven that such a project works, and persons will

participate.

2) Over 99 participants were enrolled in the project, and more than one hundred were given some form of assistance.

3) One participant who participated in the project passed the GED Test. Five others have completed applications to take the GED Test.

4) Several participants were referred to ABE centers in the Jackson area.

5) The Dial-A-Mentor Project provided ABE assistance to parents (with less than a high school education) which enabled them to better help their children.

6) Instructional assistance was extended to many participants who had tremendous responsibilities at home and simply could not attend a center.

7) Since it was the intent of the program to provide service to eligble participants in survival skills, following directions, instruction in GED preparation in math, science, English and social studies, the program was successful in helping many of these participants reach their goals in basic skills.

8) Assistance was given to participants who needed information regarding financial aid and in getting into junior college and nursing school.

9) The project was instrumental in gaining the help of several persons from local universities, schools and community agencies (See attachment for listing of agencies).

10) As stated by many participants, the Project's services have rendered motivation, confidence, counseling and instructions (MP&L inquired for its employees, and thought that it was one of the best programs that the institution could have organized. Welfare agencies indicated that the project provided assistance in areas where other programs may not have been successful because of the rapport established between participant and mentor and the confidentiality of the program).

11) Several staff members in the Office of Continuing Education at the Raymond Campus have observed the Dial-A-Teacher in operation and are now sending out leaflets and making regular referrals to the program.

12) Seven hundred and ninety contacts were made during the nine months of operation of the Dial-A-Mentor Project.

13) A well developed communication system to contact

participants by telephone, mail, leaflets and local media was put in place.

14) A non-traditional evaluation system of participant materials was utilized (a check for correctness, a zero for more assistance and review needed).

15) There was timely reply to telephone answering service materials mailed to the mentor and returned to participants.

16) The project instituted a referral/counseling service for participants to gain access to other important materials surrounding their livelihood.

17) A well developed step-by-step systematic approach to assist the participant in developing good practice habits for completion of their material was designed.

18) Also developed was a systematic recommendation system to advise the participant when he/she is prepared to take the GED with a minimal degree of failure incurred by the participant.

The aforementioned accomplishments expressed the full intent of the project--that is, to seek those persons who needed the services offered and find out if they would accept our services. This is addressed in the first listed accomplishment.

MEDIA, RECRUITING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS AGENCIES

Newspaper

Radio

Television

Posters and Notices

Local School System (Notices)
Universities and University Personnel

Newsletters

Church Referrals

Information & Referral Networking Agencies
- Welfare Agency
- Commuunity Action Agencies
- Social Security Offices
- Head Start Program
- Civic Organizations
- Social Organizations
- Family Referrals

EVALUATION OF RESULTS

The evaluation of the project is in its embryonomic stage. Therefore, many things have not been substantiated. However, there is enough proof to say without reservation that the program will work. The overall goal of the first year was to see if the project was workable. Now, we need to know if the good response was out of curiosity or a novel situation.

As stated in the original proposal, the mentor maintained a daily log of all calls or contacts made by the participant or mentor. Daily activities of all contacts has been recorded and categorized by subject area, concept and skills or other assistance as included in this report.

Many of these procedures resulted in positive achievements, as mentioned in the accomplishment section of this report.

The project was quanitatively evaluated by the number of participants that were in the project for more than three months, which was 99. However, the majority of the participants remained throughout the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is felt that these recommendations will strengthen and improve the quality of services rendered by the Dial-A-Teacher Project.

1) Ability to make long distance calls from the office or provisions for a WATTS line

2) Extended time allotted for the program

3) Time for planning and self-evaluation should be included in the yearly schedule and budget.

4) Travel expenses allocated for the ensuing year.

APPENDICES

The number of calls has been broken down specifically by areas and the frequency of calls as listed below. A graphic presentation of the general areas are shown in Charts I and II.

AREA OF SERVICE	# CONTACTS	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL SCIENCE:		
Physic	1	.001
Biology	9	.011
Earth Science	6	.008
Human Body	5	.006
WRITING:		
Grammar	57	.072
Sentence Construction	9	.011
Capitalization/Punctuation	15	.019
Contrast (Finding Details)	11	.014
READING:		
Spelling	14	.018
Word Reconstruction Usage	6	.007
Vocabulary	28	.035
Study Skills	15	.019
POLITICAL SCIENCE:	5	.006
SOCIAL SCIENCE:		
Map Reading	15	.019
History/Geography	17	.022
Behavior Science	6	.007
Economics	5	.006
MATH:		
Addition	12	.015
Subtraction	18	.023
Multiplication	12	.015
Division	72	.091
Fractions	95	.120
Percentages	13	.016
Decimals	10	.013
Word Problems	13	.016
INFORMATION:		
Program Information	99	0.125
Letters	61	0.077
Wrong Numbers	4	.005
Not In When Called	38	.048
PRACTICE TEST:	46	.058
TABE:	12	.015

GET HELP OVER THE TELEPHONE

—IF YOU HAVE NOT FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL

—IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

—IF YOUR TIME TO ATTEND CLASSES IS LIMITED

Who Ya Gonna Call?

DIAL A TEACHER

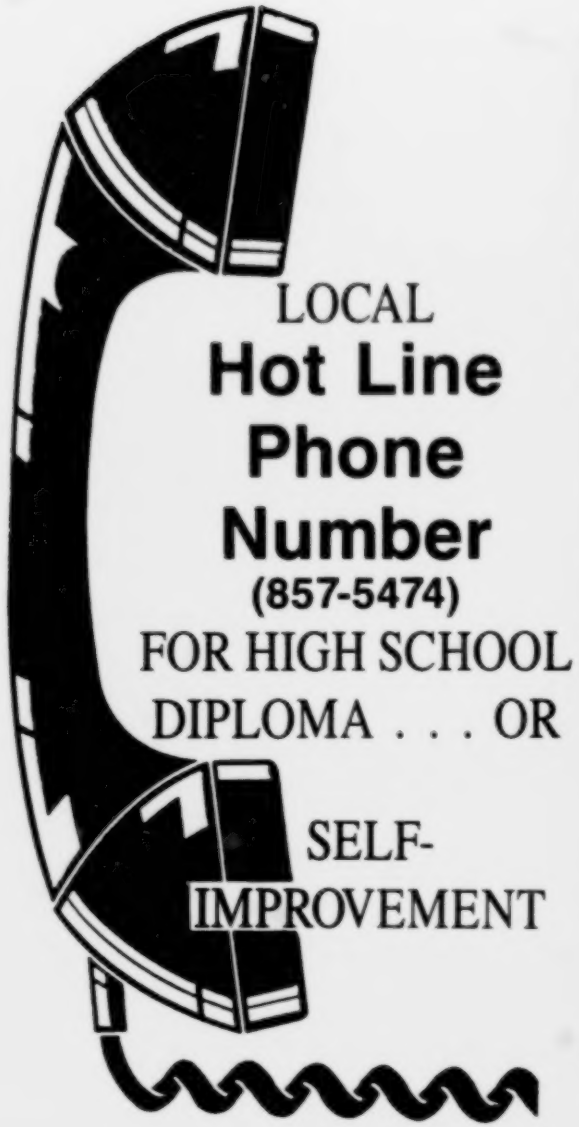
Call

Mr. Terry Collins

and

Mr. James Dykes

AT 857-5474



LOCAL

Hot Line Phone Number

(857-5474)

FOR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA . . . OR

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Hinds Junior College-District 14

Raymond, Mississippi 39154

FACTS ABOUT

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL

DEVELOPMENT

(ABE/GED)

GET HELP OVER THE TELEPHONE

- EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
- IMPROVE BASIC SKILLS IN MATH, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES AND ENGLISH
- LEARN SURVIVAL SKILLS
- ALL SERVICES ARE **FREE**

Who Ya Gonna Call?

IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE THAT CAN BENEFIT FROM OUR SERVICES, HAVE THEM CALL MR. DYKES AND MR. COLLINS (INSTRUCTORS) AT 857-5474

OR

THE DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION AT **354-2327**, DR. EDDIE E. DAWSON, DIRECTOR.

RECEIVING INFORMATION ON HOW TO GET YOUR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA IS AS NEAR AS YOUR TELEPHONE!

HERE IS A LOCAL HOTLINE . . .

857-5474

PLEASE CALL (SEVEN DAYS A WEEK - 24 HOURS A DAY) AND YOU WILL RECEIVE FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS!